

Present: Chuck Bolton, Melanie Gordon, Chris Hague, Ruth Jones, George Malette, David Trumble

Meeting called to order by Chuck Bolton at 5:07 PM. Minutes of August 21 reviewed, amended and approved with amendments.

George Malette reported that there was no meeting on September 4 as there was not a quorum.

Malette brought up **soils mapping and outreach**. The list of Weare property owners with prime agricultural soils or soils of statewide importance is quite long. (approx 21 pages)
Some selection would need to be made because the mailing discussed at prior meetings would become too expensive. Members set the cutoff at 20 or more acres of land. The purpose of the mailing was to gather input and to inform people about the proposed articles for the 2008 warrant before town meeting time. Bolton said that instead of a town mailer we could put our information in a press release. Melanie Gordon thought the Farmers' Market was a place for outreach. Dave Trumble said that it made sense to inform everyone who votes, since people with farms might not make a majority.

Chris Hague suggested sending a mailer informing people of the date, time and place of tan agricultural meeting, also saying that the warrant will contain articles on the topic, and follow up the mailer with press releases. Bolton said that the public meeting should be scheduled after the Planning Board receives the AC's proposed articles. Ruth Jones said that the public meeting should be before the Planning Board's public hearing.

The date selected was October 30 at the town hall from 7-9 PM.

Action: Gordon will ask Naomi Bolton if the budget will permit a mass mailing. Chris Hague will check the availability of the town hall and inform the committee. She will fill out the form required for reserving the town hall. All members will bring food for the refreshment table the night of the public meeting.

The committee agreed that we do not have to focus on **easement language** at this time, since language already exists.

The **Right to Farm** ordinance was reviewed. In the short version "farms and farming" will change to "farms and agriculture." In addition, the applicable statutes will be listed. These are: RSA 21:34-a, RSA 432:32-35, RSA 672:1 III-b, and RSA 674:32 a-c.

Much discussion of the disclosure notification clause followed. Trumble felt the disclosure notification was inconsistent with the rest of the article, and it should stand on its own, especially if it's not in the statutes. The committee wanted to remove this section.

Action: Confer with the Local Government Center. Why do towns include a disclosure notification and how is it administered? Check 432:32-35 and write language for the long form based on this section.

Bolton read a recent news article stating that HB 293 passed in 2007 allows municipalities to establish Agricultural Commissions, and that there is a Farm Bureau workshop on the subject.

Action: Bolton will contact the Farm Bureau and say we are interested.

The article to **establish an Agricultural Commission** was reviewed. Bolton read the 3rd draft and the committee amended language in the Resolution and Appointments sections. Some language was borrowed from the Heritage Commission document. In the Composition section there was a discussion of the reason for limiting the appointments to one member from a board or commission. Gordon felt that on a five member commission two members from some other town board or commission would have undue influence. Malette reiterated that only one Planning Board member can be on the commission. He will find out if two Selectmen can be on the commission.

Action: The language needs review by an outside board such as the Local Government Center or Farm Bureau. Bolton will see if the Farm Bureau can help us.

The language for the **cluster development** ordinance was discussed next. The article would open with "Shall the town amend the town zoning ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board and recommended by the Agricultural Committee as follows?" There ensued a discussion of how we could be sure that there was a substantial amount of farmland before giving a density bonus in a cluster development. Bolton assured the committee that the Planning Board would review the site plan carefully. There was not clear agreement about the end of the proposed amendment. Discussion of the conservation overlay focused on the intent of the article, which is to give force to the cluster development ordinance. In Zoning 30.4.2 "to the greatest extent possible" is vague because "possible" is a word that will not mean the same thing to both sides in an agreement. "Mandatory" was deliberately chosen to make clear what is expected when there are prime soils or soils of statewide importance concerned. It was noted that we should add "listed soils" to the cluster development ordinance because it presently only mentions prime soils. Dave Trumble proposed that we write a different amendment to 30.4.2. The committee decided that if we take the last sentence (Farmland preservation is mandatory. .discretion) we would have to amend the cluster development article in other ways to add authority to the article.

Malette noted that the Economic Development Committee was about to discuss signs, a topic of interest to the AC. He also said that we might look into language to add information to development or easement planning, suggesting that we require information about past agricultural practices/ activities on a parcel of land. This would protect parcels that were historically farmland even if they didn't have prime soils. No action was taken on this.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM. Next meeting is October 2, location TBA.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Hague

documents: Right to Farm draft, Cluster Development draft, Agricultural Commission draft